(a) whether it is a fact that the pesticide Endosulfan is banned in 62 countries and a demand is being made for several years to ban this in India too;

(b) whether it is also a fact that several hormonal and re-productivity related defects are developing due to this pesticide;

(c) whether it is also a fact that it was extensively used in tea gardens before 2003 due to which people suffered with fatal diseases;

(d) if so, the reasons for not banning such type of dangerous pesticide in India; and

(e) by when a ban would be put on it?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per information available, Endosulfan has been banned in about 60 countries and is being used in about 40 countries, including India. Demand for banning it has been made occasionally.

(b) and (c) Government had constituted a committee comprising experts in September 2004 under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.D. Mayee, the then Agriculture Commissioner and Chairman of Registration Committee to:

(i) examine the various reports/findings/recommendations of the previous committees on Endosulfan in order to assess the safety in regard to public health; and

(ii) make recommendations regarding the future use of Endosulfan.

The Committee, after considering all factors and available reports, recommended that the use of Endosulfan be continued as per provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968. Endosulfan has been approved for use in tea in the country, but no adverse effects have been reported.

(d) and (e) As stated in reply to parts (b) and (c), based on recommendations of the committee comprising experts, use of Endosulfan is continued as per provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968. However, Government of Kerala has been requested to institute an epidemiological study in the cashew plantation areas in the State on reports of illness in certain villages. Pending finalization of the study, as a precautionary measure, and on the recommendations of the Committee, the use of Endosulfan has been kept on hold in Kerala *vide* Notification No. S.O. 1874(E) dated 31.10.2006.

Financial assistance to drought affected States

*23. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the wake of drought in major parts of the country, the food subsidy extended by the Central Government to States, has risen to Rs. 61,000 crores from Rs. 42,000 crores in 2008-09;

(b) whether his Ministry has already sent teams of experts to all 12 affected States in the month of August and the teams have already submitted their assessment;

(c) if so, whether affected States have released a sum of Rs. 1600 crores without going into the feedback reports; and

(d) if so, to what extent the financial help provided to the States has helped in tackling the drought in the States?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The quantum of food subsidy depends on the Central Issue Price, procurement of food grains, off take under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), stock of foodgrains in central pool and other welfare schemes. During 2008-09, an amount of Rs.43668.08 crore was released to Food Corporation of India (FCI) and De-Centralized Procurement (DCP) States. For BE 2009-10, a provision of Rs.52145.44 crore has been made towards food subsidy for FCI and DCP States.

(b) Yes, Sir. Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) visited the 12 drought affected States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, during August to November, 2009 for assessment of the drought situation and recommendations on assistance required from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF).

(c) Pending assistance approved from NCCF, to meet immediate contingencies in the wake of natural calamities including drought, the State Governments have funds allotted under the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), which is shared between the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 3:1. In the wake of drought 2009-10, to enable the affected States to take effective and timely mitigating measures, the Central Government released the Central share of CRF amounting to Rs.1990.3275 crore to the 12 drought affected States. The Central Government has so far considered and approved assistance relating to 10 States (except Andhra Pradesh and Assam). The proposals relating to Andhra Pradesh and Assam are under consideration.

(d) The release from CRF helped the affected States in providing immediate relief to the distressed population pending a final decision on the recommendations of the IMCTs.

Ceiling on BPL beneficiaries under National Food Security Bill

*24. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has requested State Governments to put a ceiling on the number of BPL beneficiaries under Targeted Public Distribution System for the purpose of National Food Security Bill; and

(b) if so, the response from State Governments alongwith details thereof?